



Administrative Offices 1163 E. Seventh Street Chico, CA 95928-5999
phone: (530) 891-3000 • fax: (530) 891-3220 • www.ChicoUSD.org

August 31, 2013

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to provide comments to the FCC on the E-Rate NPRM, proceeding 13-184. E-Rate has been very important to Chico Unified School District (CUSD) because it has helped our students and teachers gain access to a wealth of online resources, communicate and collaborate, and develop the 21st century skills necessary for college and career. However, E-Rate funding levels have not kept pace with my CUSD's past, current and futures bandwidth needs. I urge you to raise the E-Rate funding level to at least \$5 billion per year, which is close to the average demand level for each of the past two years.

As a Director of Information Technology for Chico Unified School District in California, I know that seamlessly infusing digital learning throughout the curriculum is a prerequisite for students to graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in today's global economy. Access to high-speed broadband is the key to allowing modern teaching and learning to occur in all schools across the country.

In the last two years our strategy for ERATE funding was to combine 90% schools with an 80% school to give us an 86%-87% ERATE discount on priority 1 services. This was specifically to leverage funding to help infrastructure needs to keep up are ability to deliver network infrastructure across the campuses and into the classroom where use of digital learning can happen for personalize learning, provide online classes, meet Common Core State Standards, administer online assessments, and make data-driven decisions. However, because we wanted to stretch the dollars and get as much as we could afford (after all, we are talking about three 90% schools with one 80% school) USAC denied funding on both years (ERATE Year 14 and Year 15) because of lack of funds. Our network infrastructure is now aging and failing to keep up with demand. This funding strategy was for the sites (six school sites in two years) in our district that qualify for priority 1 internal connections. We still have twelve other school sites that do not qualify for Priority 1 Internal connection (infrastructure). The mid 80% denied funding is the third time in the history of the program (2 in the last year) that Internal Connections for Priority 1 did not fund (usually making our strategy a good one). But the need for a reliable high-speed network is only going to increase with the expectation of Common Core and data driven decisions from the district office, to the classroom and to the homes of every student. As the demand of anytime, anywhere, from any device access continues to grow, this means that access at school (where we have a concentration of students, teachers and administrators) is going to grow. CUSD is far behind after two denied funding in two years of over 3 million dollars of infrastructure (just taking Priority 1 Internal applications for 2011-2013) Instead of trying to stretch the funding with combining 90% sites with a 80% site we are going back to the few 90% school sites alone, but there still may not be enough funding for those applications. We are also considering doing what many other districts are doing and going with data directly on the teacher/student devices (priority 1 internet service) and abandoning the idea of building high speed wired and wireless campuses. We just do not have the money to keep up. Even with new bond dollars the school facilities compete for those dollars to bring the sites up to compliance with ADA and safety issues. There just isn't enough money to do it all. ERATE was design to help with communications and data delivery, and it obviously doesn't have enough money to keep up with demands (as we have been denied the last two years in a row).

The E-Rate program has been a phenomenal success in bringing internet access to almost every classroom in America. In the last funding cycle, applications from schools and libraries requested a total of more than \$5 billion—twice the amount of available funding. I respectfully urge the FCC to increase funding for the E-Rate program to at least \$5 billion to meet this current demand. All students need access to high-speed broadband. Our nation's future depends on their success.

Sincerely,

Jason Gregg- Certified CTO
Director of Information Services
Chico Unified School District
1163 East Seventh Street
Chico, CA 95928